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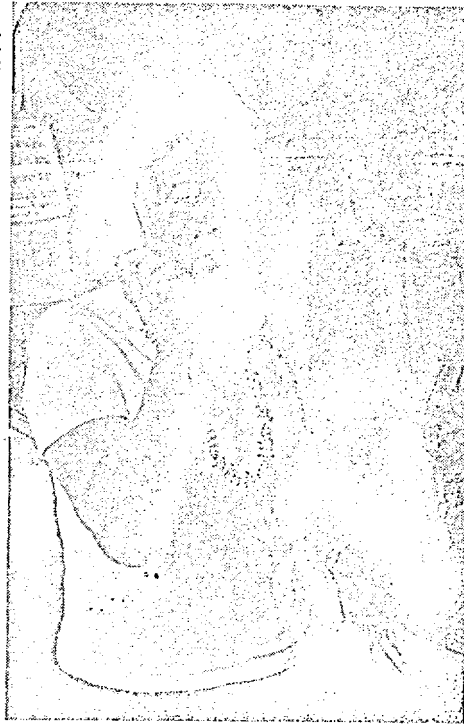
THE MEDIA

Our Woman in Peking

"When are you going to send us your man?" Chou En-lai asked Sergio Lepri, editor of the Italian news agency ANSA, when Lepri stopped off in Peking for an audience one day last spring. "We're not sending one," Lepri replied with a smile. "We're sending a woman." At that the Chinese Premier clapped his hands in delight. "Ah," he said, "in that case our pleasure will be double."

This week Chou's anticipation will be rewarded. Almost a year after the establishment of diplomatic relations between Italy and Communist China, ANSA correspondent Ada Principalli will arrive in Peking to become the first woman member of the 22-member foreign press corps there.* Miss Principalli, who has covered London, Paris and New York during seventeen years with ANSA, is moving her infant son, a temporary Italian au pair girl, a trunkful of books and a winter's supply of pantyhose and make-up into two-room living and working quarters in Peking's Tsin Chao Hotel. "I don't know what I should expect as a woman," she admits. "But I don't think in those terms. I want to cover China because it's a world I don't know."

Handsome Ada Principalli—"You can say I'm 40," she laughs—was chosen for Peking over several male candidates, most of whom were young bachelors.



Girolamo di Mafo

Ada Principalli: A great moment

"She is a first-rate journalist who always did well in other bureaus," says Francesco Malgeri, president of ANSA, which has been petitioning Peking for the past seven years for permission to set up an office. "We haven't said this to the papers," he adds, "but a woman with a child might adjust better than a man to Peking's isolation."

Ada Principalli's enthusiasm for her new job would seem to confirm her boss's confidence. "It's a great moment to be there," she says. "China is just opening up to the world and we can watch how it's done. But the first thing I need is a good Chinese nanny."

*She will join seven correspondents from non-Communist countries, including three from Japanese newspapers, one each from Britain (Reuters), West Germany (Deutsche Presse-Agentur), Canada (Toronto Globe and Mail) and France (Agence France Presse), and fourteen from Communist countries.